

Create flexible, effective conditional formats in Excel 2007

In this article

- ↓ Create a conditional format
- ↓ Manage conditional formatting rules
- ↓ Change the format of a rule
- ↓ Create three new types of conditional formats

Recording package volumes, vehicle miles, and other business data in a worksheet enables you to make important decisions about your operations. You can change the appearance of data labels and the worksheet itself to make interpreting your data easier.

Another way you can make your data easier to interpret is to have Microsoft Office Excel 2007 change the appearance of your data based on its value. These formats are called conditional formats because the data must meet certain conditions to have a format applied to it. For instance, if chief operating officer Jenny Lysaker wanted to highlight any Thursdays with higher-than-average weekday package volumes, she could define a conditional format that tests the value in the cell recording total sales, which changes the format of the cell's contents when the condition is met.

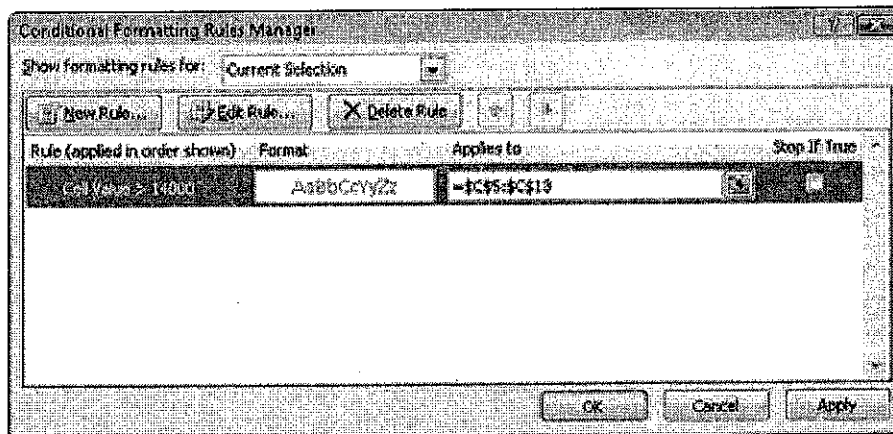
In previous versions of Excel, you could have a maximum of three conditional formats. There's no such limit in Office

Excel 2007; you may have as many conditional formats as you like. The other major limitation of conditional formats in Office Excel 2003 and earlier versions was that Excel stopped evaluating conditional formats as soon as it found one that applied to a cell. In other words, you couldn't have multiple conditions be true for the same cell! In Office Excel 2007, you can control whether Office Excel 2007 stops or continues after it discovers that a specific condition applies to a cell.

Create a conditional format

To create a conditional format, you select the cells to which you want to apply the format, display the **Home** tab of the user interface, and then, in the **Styles** group, click **Conditional Formatting** to display a menu of possible conditional formats. Office Excel 2007 enables you to create all the conditional formats available in previous versions of the program and offers many more conditional formats than were previously available. Prior to Office Excel 2007, you could create conditional formats to highlight cells that contained values meeting a certain condition. For example, you could highlight all cells that contain a value over 100, contain a date before 1/28/2007, or contain an order amount between \$100 and \$500. In Office Excel 2007, you can define conditional formats that change how the program displays data in cells that contain values above or below the average values of the related cells, that contain values near the top or bottom of the value range, or that contain values duplicated elsewhere in the selected range.

When you select which kind of condition to create, Office Excel 2007 displays a dialog box that contains fields and controls you can use to define your rule. To display all your rules, display the **Home** tab and then, in the **Styles** group, click **Conditional Formatting**. From the menu that appears, click **Manage Rules** to display the **Conditional Formatting Rules Manager**.



↑ TOP OF PAGE

Manage conditional formatting rules

The **Conditional Formatting Rules Manager**, which is new in Office Excel 2007, enables you to control your conditional formats in the following ways:

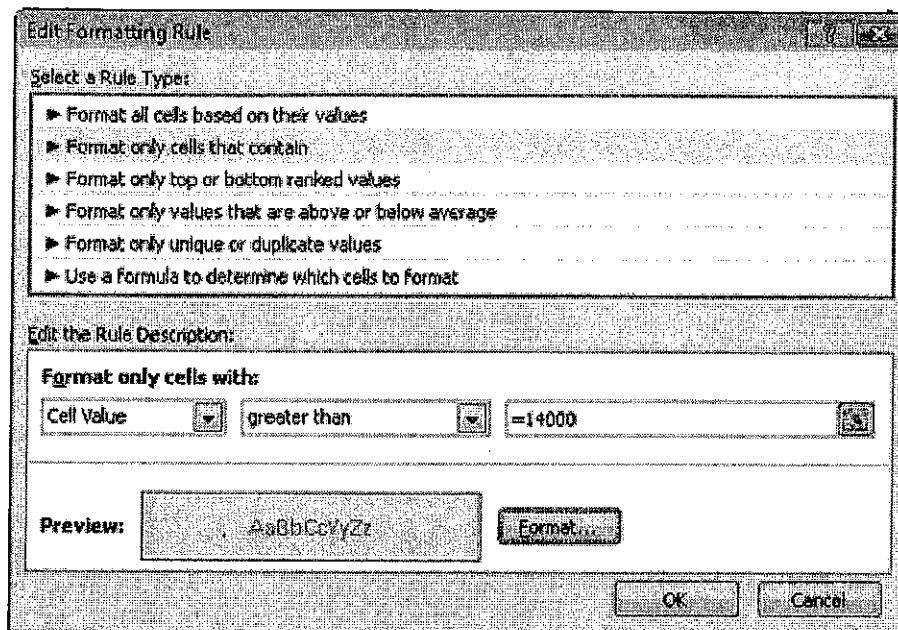
- Creates a new rule by clicking the **New Rule** button.
- Changes a rule by clicking the rule and then clicking the **Edit Rule** button.
- Removes a rule by clicking the rule and then clicking the **Delete Rule** button.
- Moves a rule up or down in the order by clicking the **Move Up** or **Move Down** button.
- Controls whether Office Excel 2007 continues evaluating conditional formats after it finds a rule to apply by selecting or clearing a rule's **Stop If True** check box.
- Saves any new rules and closes the **Conditional Formatting Rules Manager** by clicking **OK**.
- Saves any new rules without closing the **Conditional Formatting Rules Manager** by clicking **Apply**.
- Discards any unsaved changes by clicking **Cancel**.

NOTE Clicking the **New Rule** button in the **Conditional Formatting Rules Manager** displays the **New Formatting Rule** dialog box. The commands in the **New Formatting Rule** dialog box duplicate the options displayed when you click the **Home** tab's **Conditional Formatting** button.

↑ TOP OF PAGE

Change the format of a rule

After you create a rule, you can change the format applied if the rule is true by clicking the rule and then clicking the **Edit Rule** button to display the **Edit Formatting Rule** dialog box. In that dialog box, click the **Format** button to display the **Format Cells** dialog box. After you define your format, click **OK**.



IMPORTANT: Office Excel 2007 doesn't check to make sure that your conditions are logically consistent, so you need to be sure that you enter your conditions correctly.

Create three new types of conditional formats

Office Excel 2007 also enables you to create three new types of conditional formats: data bars, color scales, and icon sets. Data bars summarize the relative magnitude of values in a cell range by extending a band of color across the cell.

Distribution Capacity

Northeast	<div style="width: 47%;"></div>	47%
Atlantic	<div style="width: 75%;"></div>	75%
Southeast	<div style="width: 39%;"></div>	39%
North Central	<div style="width: 54%;"></div>	54%
Midwest	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>	40%
Southwest	<div style="width: 73%;"></div>	73%
Mountain West	<div style="width: 51%;"></div>	51%
Northwest	<div style="width: 69%;"></div>	69%
Central	<div style="width: 41%;"></div>	41%


Color scales compare the relative magnitude of values in a cell range by applying colors from a two- or three-color set to your cells. The intensity of a cell's color reflects the value's tendency toward the top or bottom of the values in the range.

Distribution Capacity

Northeast	<div style="width: 47%;"></div>	47%
Atlantic	<div style="width: 75%;"></div>	75%
Southeast	<div style="width: 39%;"></div>	39%
North Central	<div style="width: 54%;"></div>	54%
Midwest	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>	40%
Southwest	<div style="width: 73%;"></div>	73%
Mountain West	<div style="width: 51%;"></div>	51%
Northwest	<div style="width: 69%;"></div>	69%
Central	<div style="width: 41%;"></div>	41%

Icon sets are collections of three, four, or five images that Office Excel 2007 displays when certain rules are met.

Distribution Capacity

Northeast	
Atlantic	
Southeast	
North Central	
Midwest	
Southwest	
Mountain West	
Northwest	
Central	

When you click a color scale or icon set in the **Conditional Formatting Rule Manager** and then click the **Edit Rule** button, you can control when Office Excel 2007 applies a color or icon to your data.

Be sure to not include cells that contain summary formulas in your conditionally formatted ranges. The values, which could be much higher or lower than your regular cell data, could throw off your formatting comparisons.